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ABSTRACT

This package is the fifth of twelve in the Skills for Adult Guidance Educators (SAGE) system, which provides instruction in a set of necessary competencies specifically designed for adult education counselors, teachers, and paraprofessionals. The materials provide a process for developing and implementing counseling and guidance programs unique to different target populations, program settings, and local conditions. Contents include three modules that pertain to one role statement. The role statement describes the trainee objective to demonstrate awareness of various racial, ethnic, economic, and age groups. Each module contains some or all of the following information: topic, learning objective, rationale, preassessment, learning activities, postassessment, and appended materials (supplemental activities, tape transcripts, and articles). (YLB)

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SKILLS FOR ADULT GUIDANCE EDUCATORS.

Package 5

Toward Interracial and Intercultural Understanding

Developed by

the

ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM

of the

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
710 S. W. Second Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97204

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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Introduction

The three modules developed for this package are designed to acquaint the trainee with possible barriers the counselor may experience in communicating with individuals from varying cultural and ethnic backgrounds. The specific cultural traits and characteristics described in the modules are only suggested ones out of many possible alternatives. The trainee is encouraged to adopt these modules or individualize them in ways which may help staff overcome communication barriers with specific target populations in local settings.

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Role Statement 9.0

Demonstrate awareness of various racial, ethnic, economic, and age groups

MODULE 9.1

TOPIC

Identify social and individual practices and/or behaviors that may affect interracial and intercultural understanding.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

The trainee will be able to describe and interpret specific social phenomena that might negatively affect interracial and/or intercultural awareness and communication.

RATIONALE

A trainee representing mainstream societal values should be aware of significant social practices, phenomena, and behavior which can negatively affect interracial and intercultural awareness and communication.

This module identifies and describes why some social phenomena can hamper communication with and awareness of ethnically/culturally different people. It indicates how awareness of those phenomena can facilitate one's ability to relate to and interact positively with such people.

PREASSESSMENT

Respond with eighty percent accuracy to each of the following types of social phenomena either orally or in writing to your supervisor (if available).

Describe characteristic(s) of each of the social phenomena listed below. In your descriptions keep in mind that this module is thrust toward effective, positive communication with racially and culturally different people.

Social Phenomena

1. Authoritarian Personality
2. Prejudice
3. Social Distance
4. Stereotyping

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Learning Activity One

Read the explanations and definitions of terms in the Appended Materials.

Learning Activity Two

Read the notes from the author in the Appended Materials.

Learning Activity Three

Read materials #1 through #6 for (1) information about some specific social phenomena, (2) situations that might occur when such social phenomena are part of interracial/intercultural interaction, and (3) some optional activities you might do to increase your awareness of your own feelings about culturally different people, and/or how to maintain a positive atmosphere for communication with such people.

Learning Activity Four

Note source list for further optional reading.

POSTASSESSMENT

(1) Complete the preassessment with eighty percent accuracy.

(2) Explain either verbally or in writing how at least five of the social phenomena discussed could be impediments to effective communication. Give one reason for each social behavior listed.

(3) For each of the phenomena you listed in "2," list at least one approach or behavior to lessen the possibility that communication barriers might exist.

(4) List at least five ways this module has either reinforced or changed your perspective about impediments to communication with ethnically/culturally different people.

Note: 1, 2, 3, and 4 should be done with your supervisor. If that is not possible, completing 2, 3, and 4 may still be of value by allowing you to articulate your perspective in writing.

APPENDED MATERIALS

A. Explanations and definitions of terms.

The person referred to as trainee in this module is assumed to possibly function as an instructor or counselor, or both.

Counselees/students will be referred to as clients.

The trainee is assumed to be representative of either mainstream society or a culture other than that of his/her culturally/racially different clients.

The information in this module is basically for the trainee who is inexperienced and unaware when it comes to working with people who are ethnically/culturally different.

The social phenomena discussed in this module are generalizations. Consequently, it is assumed such traits exist in varying degrees among individuals. The trainee is expected to realize the necessity of the generalized nature of these terms, and to apply them to himself/herself with that limitation in mind.

The specific social phenomena discussed in this module were chosen because it was felt they were potentially negative to effective communication. There are any number of other social phenomena or other variables that might also affect interaction, negatively or otherwise. Those discussed are simply examples so the trainee can be aware of the effect of such behaviors on communication.

Culturally different has been used to describe those clients not a part of the culture of mainstream society for one reason or another. The term is limiting because there are varying degrees of acculturation among such clients. It is assumed that ethnic/cultural differences often present communication challenges to the trainee.

B. Notes from the author.

In order to create and maintain a learning/counseling situation that is viable and useful for any person, the author fervently believes the trainee must conduct himself/herself in a culturally relative manner. In order to do that effectively and convincingly, the trainee must believe in what they are doing not only in counseling/instructing, but also in their personal beliefs and daily living.

The social phenomena discussed in this module are important factors to consider if one is trying to have culturally relative interaction with clients. They can surely be negative influences upon communication of one is unaware. It is hoped that these social phenomena will not be enforced and become detrimental if the trainee realizes their importance.

To write this module, the author incorporated a great deal of counseling/teaching experience with culturally different people, as well as much of her own philosophy. The thrust of this module is to create an equalizing situation for educationally and socially disadvantaged people. This is a large challenge, for in many cases this is a "last chance" effort at success for these people. They do not need another negative experience. Because of past bad experiences, they may be defensive, or have feelings of inferiority. Thus, the trainee's task is intensified. Combine those things with deeply ingrained cultural differences, and effective communication becomes very important.

It is a known fact, regardless of whose fault, that culturally/ethnically different people often do not do particularly well in our educational system or society. Because of their differences, often they have been misunderstood, or they themselves misunderstood things. Their capacities to learn and to exist in terms of society do not stem from their differences. However, communication with them, and acceptance of them do affect their opportunities and abilities to develop their own capacities to learn and exist as they wish. This is the trainee's responsibility. This responsibility doesn't just deal with worktexts, audio-vidual aids, counseling/guidance, and/or the availability of classes for adults. It also involves highly-charged feelings, values, and principles both on the trainee's part and clients' parts.

These people must be recognized and respected in their own right as persons with meaningful lives, however 'different.' Even if the trainee respects the meaning in their lives, and encourages them to maintain their cultural heritage, they still will need some "tools to survive" in society. The trainee is often a source of those "tools" to them. To foster respect and yet incorporate enough societal demands for such people to be self-determined, a culturally relative situation seems mandatory. To invision such a situation, this module singles out past approaches that have been particularly detrimental to interracial/intercultural communication.

Awareness of these past approaches is sometimes an enlightening experience, because they are often unintentional. Actually changing one's self-awareness and approach to communication is arduous and takes time and experience. It is worth the effort.

C. #1 The Authoritarian Personality

Part A

1. This section lists, for your information, the definition and description of the authoritarian personality. The authoritarian personality encompasses this cluster of traits:

   a. High degree of conformity
   b. Dependence on authority
   c. Overcontrol of feelings and impulses
   d. Rigidity of thinking
   e. Ethnocentrism

2. Persons who possess authoritarian personalities often:

   a. Adhere to conventional values
   b. Are preoccupied with considerations of power and status
   c. Identify with authoritative figures
   d. Are generally hostile to members of minority or other groups

Part B

1. This section describes for you those kinds of persons who do not conform to and do deviate from mainstream values and traits and may be unacceptable to authoritarian personality:

   a. Ethnic minorities (Blacks, American Indians, Mexican-Americans, etc.)
   b. Incarcerated persons
   c. Ex-incarcerated persons
   d. Sub-cultures
   e. Economically, politically, and socially powerless and non-participating persons
   f. Those on public assistance

2. The above groups of people:

   a. Experience a great deal of dependence on authority in their lives, but often are hostile or exploitive of authority in action
   b. Authority in whatever form (BIA - Welfare, educational system, etc.) represent the power of the mainstream to these persons. They often do not see dependence to such authority as a good

thing for them, but rather as a controlling mechanism in their lives that limits their freedom to do or be as they wish, and/or to be respected as themselves.

3. Often the persons listed in Part B, #1, experience:

   a. Hostility and anger toward authority; or may express their feelings of hostility and/or anger in an uncontrolled or irrational manner
   b. Apathy toward active participation in society and resign themselves to accept the dependence they find themselves part of. Such apathy may create impetus for a "don't give a damn" attitude that involves free expression of one's impulses and a lack of caring as to the outcome of those actions

4. Persons listed in Part B, #1, present unique cultural traits and group patterns that are different than the mainstream.

   a. <u>They</u> may be very rigid <u>in their differences</u>, whereas the authoritarian personality is also rigid in his/her thinking from a mainstream point of view. Both view themselves as right. Neither would necessarily desire change in themselves. The disadvantaged groups, because of their powerlessness do not possess the power, or are in the situation (opportunities, resources, politically, economically, etc.) to facilitate the verification of <u>their</u> differences as a valid part of society.

5. <u>Ethnocentrism</u> involves not only thinking that one's cultural and/or ethnic background is superior, but also <u>holds contempt for those who are different than one's cultural and/or ethnic base</u>.

   a. Ethnic minorities have cultural and/or ethnic bases different from and unique to that of the mainstream
   b. Deviants, those in poverty, and other disadvantaged groups that have been labeled as such and are in disadvantaged positions in society, they also exhibit cultural traits different than those of mainstream society

<u>Part C</u>

You might choose to do the activities listed in this section:

1. Those groups of "different" persons discussed in Parts A and B will be well represented in ABE. To create a viable learning situation in ABE for those persons you, the trainee, should consider some things about yourself:

   a. Are you an authoritarian person according to the description in Part A?

b. If so, that may negatively affect interracial and intercultural communication with cultural and/or ethnically different trainees

To determine that, do these things:

a. Write down four things by which you determine the acceptability of ethnically/culturally different persons for ABE. Your list should include no stereotypes (clients' looks, dress, mannerisms) of disadvantaged and/or minority persons. It should concentrate mainly upon what the client:

   1. Says,
   2. How it is being said
   3. How they are actually doing (tests, etc.)
   4. How well things are being done by the client at that particular moment

b. If the client speaks English as a Second Language remember that English is a foreign tongue to them. Their native language is foreign to you, not to them. Their language is no less valid than English, and is the most meaningful method of communication they have. Ask yourself if you are willing to learn or realize the importance of speaking the clients' native tongue. Explain in written form why that is a positive approach on your part.

c. Every human being needs to have dignity. Are you willing to communicate with someone who is ethnically/culturally different? Do you accept and respect their fundamental worth? Ask yourself these questions:

   1. Does this client know positive things I could learn about from him/her?
   2. Is this client a person I can laugh with and enjoy?
   3. Do I share many experiences and feelings (parenthood, happiness, sadness, frustration, desire to survive) with this client?
   4. Do I want to be near this client?
   5. Is this client a person I can listen to? I hear him/her, but am I able to really listen to them? Do I screen out the things I don't agree with, or don't wish to hear?
   6. Do I decide my answers or rebuttals to questions or conversations without listening long enough to know what the client is asking or contributing?
   7. Will I or do I want to take time to drop pretentions and communicate honestly with this client, person to person? Or do I want to maintain a formal social distance?

8. Do I want to learn the language of this person—whether it involves differences in meaning and/or the words themselves?
9. Am I willing to read about and study the cultural base of this client? Can I accept its validity, even if I don't understand it?
10. Am I willing to go to the client's home and participate in the client's community in order to more clearly understand his/her special needs and desires?
11. Am I willing to take time to seek out the "why" for a client's actions, and not to judge a client only by behavior exhibited?

C. #2 The "Halo Effect"

Part A

1. Read this section for some information describing the "halo effect." The "halo effect" is:

   a. The tendency to allow one characteristic of an individual to influence our judgment of other characteristics of that individual
   b. Positive or negative
   c. Based largely on the power of suggestion
   d. Often a major source of one's personal bias and distortions of judgment
   e. A source of information or treatment that can often permanently affect the recipient of it

Part B

1. Read this section for information about situations which may arise because of the "halo effect." Some ways the "halo effect" can effect culturally ethnically different clients are listed as:

   a. If a person's appearance is not acceptable or in accordance with mainstream standards, the trainee (1) may tend to have less contact with him/her; (2) may see the client as disagreeable or distasteful. That may make the learning situation less viable for the client in terms of (1) discussion, (2) positive feedback concerning coursework, (3) feeling a part of class or acceptable in class, (4) deciding they must be a "dirty" person and not worth the effort, (5) discouraging them from attending. For example, if an Indian client is quiet, the trainee might assume the client:

1. isn't learning
2. doesn't wish to contribute
3. isn't intelligent enough to learn the material
4. isn't responding to the trainee

Whereas, in reality the client may:

1. be waiting to speak when he/she feels there is something to say
2. may be afraid to contribute verbally in that particular group
3. may feel listening is more important at that time

For example, if a client misses class often the trainee might assume:

1. the client isn't motivated
2. doesn't care about class
3. isn't responsible in responding to his/her obligations

Whereas, in reality the client:

1. may be experiencing frustrations because of wanting to go to class and not being able to (no gas, baby-sitting problems, car hassles, family problems, etc.)
2. may care a great deal about class
3. may have done a great deal of coursework out of class time when he/she couldn't get there

For example, if a client seems unable to verbalize a goal or to choose a program in ABE, the trainee might assume the client:

1. is irresponsible in terms of himself/herself, as well as their family
2. isn't a mature person
3. is unable to make "good" decisions

Whereas, in reality the client may:

1. not be aware of the advantages of disadvantages of particular goals or program
2. may have so many concrete crises facing him/her that it is difficult to visualize or choose an abstract educational goal
3. may not know how to make decisions for himself/herself
4. may not have any idea what may or may not be good for him/her

Part C

You might wish to do the activities listed in this section.

1. The trainee needs to determine whether or not the "halo effect" is negating his/her communications with disadvantaged students in ABE. To ascertain that, the trainee should list answers to these questions:

   a. Do you feel people are acceptable or unacceptable merely by their appearance?
   b. If a client is illkempt or "poorly" clothed, does it bother you?
   c. Would you prefer not to be seen with or by a "poorly" dressed person?
   d. Would you rather associate with, or be near a person who dresses like you do? Does such a person seem brighter and more acceptable to ABE as far as you're concerned?
   e. Does it bother you if clients are very quiet, or do not always have an answer to questions?
   f. Does it bother you if clients don't seem to feel free to "pass the time of day" with you?
   g. Do you think someone has limited learning capacities if they are quiet, even before you've seen how they do with course work?
   h. Does it irritate you if someone is often late to class?
   i. Does it irritate you if someone often misses class?
   j. Is attendance in class more important than performance in class?
   k. What are four reasons for missing class you feel are legitimate?
   l. Do the reasons you listed in #k include the adult responsibilities and problems that may well exist for many clients outside of ABE?
   m. List three kinds of success you feel clients may strive for that do not involve a diploma
   n. If a client cannot visualize goals, do you:

      1. offer alternatives for them to choose from?
      2. explain the goals and programs available in a detailed manner
      3. attempt to really encourage questions and discussion about goals and programs from them?
      4. all of the above?

C. #3 Prejudice

Part A

Read this section for some information about prejudice.

1. Prejudice, literally, means any kind of prejudgment. It:
   a. Can be favorable or unfavorable
   b. Is generally used in the negative sense in terms of different people in social psychology
   c. Is generally emotionally charged
   d. Is generally not changed by contrary information
   e. Is generally highly stereotyped
   f. Is learned (there is no inborn dislike of different persons or innate distaste of different people)
   g. Is acquired through direct or indirect interaction with other people
   h. Can be learned early enough in life so that it antedates genuine capacity for judgment, and therefore is accepted without questioning
   i. Is usually strongly reinforced because if is often acquired from people who are admired and accepted as authorities
   j. Is far-reaching and many-sided

Part B

Read this section to gain insight to some situations that might exist because of prejudice.

1. Some ways prejudice can affect the trainee's effectiveness in class, as well as the viability of class for the clients are:
   a. The trainee may find it more comfortable to maintain a great degree of social distance from ethnically/culturally different clients, thus alienating them
   b. The trainee may not exhibit friendliness or interest in the clients and/or their coursework or contributions in discussions
   c. The clients may assume the trainee is a negative person because the trainee is a mainstream person
   d. The client may have hostile or exploitive feelings to the trainee because he/she represents the mainstream fo the client
   e. The trainee may tend to associate more freely with clients who have undergone a greater degree of assimilation or acculuration than other clients
   f. The clients may be prejudiced among themselves between different ethnic groups

g. Prejudice can create negative feelings that make the possibility of positive communication less and negative communication more

Part C

You might choose to do the activities in this section

1. If prejudice is learned, then there must be ways to "unlearn" it. Try some of these approaches to implement "such unlearning" for both the clients and yourself:

   a. Provide opportunities for group participation (trainee included) that:

      1. are informal so people feel freer to be themselves
      2. are groups including members of different ethnic/cultural backgrounds
      3. involve consensus decisions so all people are part of the decision-making process
      4. involve role plays and/or discussion of hypothetical situations which will nurture awareness of and sensitivity to others, and the roles they are part of in life
      5. encourage respect and acceptance for each persons, even though actually understanding differences may not be part of that. This can be done by making sure each person express his or her own feelings, and in doing so, there is an opportunity for each to attempt visualizing the other's position
      6. make sure people listen to others—not just hear them
      7. work on participants not creating their rebuttal to a discussion before a person is done presenting his/her point of view or contribution
      8. you could ask persons to listen to themselves in terms of or relation to others and what they have said

C. #4 Social Class

Part A

Read this section for some information regarding social class

1. Social class is described as:

   a. Indicating social stratification (re: upper class, middle class, lower class)
   b. Indicating broad social groupings within society

c. Being based on prestige, which is determined by such characteristics as:

1. occupation
2. income
3. family genealogy
4. moral standing
5. residential area
6. social relationships

d. Having boundaries of groupings that are not too rigid
e. Having a little degree of social mobility or crossing class lines
f. It's mobility being limited by:

1. social discouragement of mixed neighborhoods
2. illegality of intermarriage in certain states

Part B

Read this section to gain information offering insight to situations occurring because of social class differences.

1. ABE may likely consist of clients who are from social classes other than the middle class. Situations with clients that may arise because of social class differences in ABE include:

a. The clients often will feel the Anglo trainee is middle-class, and "different" than them, whether that is true or not
b. Education and its goals are valued by the middle class. That is not necessarily true with all people. The trainee may not understand, or may become impatient with clients' lack of motivation or ability to envision or strive for educational goals. The clients may:

1. not comprehend the value of an education because of past negative educational experiences
2. not know how to study, take tests, or approach learning, even though he/she wants to attain basic skills
3. not accept the fact that an education is a right and reality for him/her, even though their parents or spouse may not have an education

c. Particularly within certain class groupings, there are a large percentage of the minority people. Some communication gaps this presents are:

1. cultural interpretations of social class, status, and prestige that differ among different ethnic groups

2. actions acceptable to the middle class trainee may be culturally meaningless or offensive to ethnically/culturally different clients
3. interpretations of various learning materials may differ with ethnically/culturally different clients as opposed to middle class interpretations of the same material. Both are valid

Part C

You might choose to do the activities in this section.

1. Social class differences can create communication barriers between ethnically/culturally different clients and a trainee. Do some of these approaches to overcome those barriers.

   a. Scrutinize yourself for pretentions. Use none. Clients come to ABE on their own for a "last chance at education." Establish communication person to person, adult to adult
   b. Regardless of the status the clients see you as having, just be a human being. Allow yourself to make mistakes visibly. Share the humor of those errors and then pick up where you left off. The clients will feel less social distance if he/she sees you as less than perfect
   c. Listen to and accept the honest efforts and validity of different interpretations of materials. If it is comfortable talk about it, learn the "whys" involved. ABE should be edifying for the trainee as well as the clients
   d. Encourage clients to ask any questions(s) they feel they need an answer to. Tell them if they want to know that particular thing, then it is a valid question. Often clients hesitate because they feel their status makes the question "dumb" or not relevant.
   e. Have casual voluntary rap sessions about:

      1. why go to school?
      2. what is an education for?
      3. what else could we study?
      4. what could we do after we reach goals we've set?

      (Note: then respect and follow-up on their suggestions.)

   f. Bring in resource people to:

      1. describe employment opportunities in the community
      2. enrich the regular curriculum with humanities information in the community (theatre, radio, concerts, films)
      3. discuss the types of things students have requested to see or hear about

C. #5 Social Distance

Part A

Read this section for some information regarding social distance.

1. Social distance is described as:

   a. The degree of sympathy and acceptance existing between groups or members of groups
   b. Stemming primarily from one's membership in groups
   c. Stemming from persons' identification with:

      1. a certain race
      2. a particular nationality
      3. a specific religion
      4. a certain occupational group
      5. a particular socio-economic level
      6. a specific club

   d. Occurring when persons often unconsciously adopt the attitudes of groups (listed in #c) toward outsiders
   e. Being reinforced by printed materials used to widen the gaps between groups (like between Blacks and Whites, labor and management, etc.)
   f. Being closely related to our level of aspiration and our desire for prestige and standing
   g. Being closely related to power and status in the mainstream

Part B

Read this section to gain insight to situations that might occur in ABE because of social distance.

1. Many social groups will be represented in ABE. A good deal of those will not be representative of the mainstream. Situations that may arise in ABE because of social distance are:

   a. Distrust or antagonism between ethnic and/or cultural groups
   b. Anxiety or criticism toward specific "different" religions
   c. Anxiety and lack of sureness felt between the trainee and the clients
   d. Anxiety and lack of sureness felt between the clients and the trainee
   e. Insecure feelings on the part of the clients that they are "outsiders" in a school atmosphere
   f. Inadequate feelings on the part of the clients that the status (as they see it) of the trainee makes the trainee unapproachable

g. Obligatory feelings on the part of the trainee that he/she must maintain a rigid teacher-pupil relationship
h. Authoritarian feelings on the part of the trainee that clients must aspire to the levels of prestige and standing the trainee values

Part C

You might want to do the activities in this section.

1. Social distance can impede the viability of ABE for clients. It can also lessen the amount of effective communication taking place there. Consider trying these approaches to overcome some of the communication barriers social distance can create.

   a. Plan group participation that includes all types of people in your ABE situation. Have it informal, so people feel free to interact. Encourage participants to share information (prepared or extemporaneous) about groups they belong to. Those could include:

      1. Social clubs
      2. Ethnic organizations
      3. Religious affiliations and activities
      4. Occupational involvements
      5. Traditional occasions of a specific nationality

      This is to increase awareness and understanding on the part of those involved. The trainee should participate.

   b. Establish a relaxed adult to adult atmosphere and basis for communication in your ABE setting. Be on a first name basis with students. You are all there for interaction to be positive. It will more likely be that way if it's friendly and not pretentious.
   c. Many clients have had bad past education experiences. Their concepts of teachers may be negative. Don't live up to that. Act as a flexible resource person. If you establish rigid social distance you might:

      1. Make them feel like you are treating them as children
      2. Make them feel inadequate or unintelligent
      3. Lessen their hopes for success if they are concerned more about pleasing you than learning for themselves
      4. Limit their opportunities to attain such vital survival tools as learning to make choices, seeing the positive aspect of their own mistakes, or to function independently on self-determined goals
      5. Limit their feelings of belonging in ABE

6. Limit their ability to relax and enjoy the social interaction that can be a very worthwhile and meaningful part of ABE for them

d. Do not impose <u>your</u> educational goals and aspirations upon the clients. Instead:

1. Be available to discuss alternatives with them. <u>They</u> should make the choices
2. Realize that as clients attain study skills and knowledge in areas of subject matter, their perspectives will enlarge and they will envision more far-reaching goals. <u>It takes time.</u> Facilitate this process by encouraging them to see themselves in new lights which are indicative of whatever social mobility they seem to be striving for. Give them and have readily available information about other opportunities and courses of study in the community that they could aspire to

C. <u>#6 Stereotyping</u>

<u>Part A</u>

Read this section for some information regarding stereotypes.

1. Stereotypes are described as:

a. Relatively fixed, over-simplified, and usually biased concepts, generally of a person or a social group
b. Not easily changed
c. A special form of categorization in which certain attitudes are selected and used to identify a group, while other characteristics tend to be ignored
d. Having a consensus on the traits attributed to the group being stereotyped. In other words, a substantial number of people agree on the group's identifying characteristics
e. Having a discrepancy between attributed traits and actual traits
f. Being almost always at least partly false, with little basis in fact
g. Sometimes being positive as well as negative

<u>Part B</u>

Read this section to gain insight to situations that might occur because of stereotyping in ABE.

1. Ethnically and/or culturally different persons, as well as disadvantaged groups are well represented in ABE. These people are often discriminated against because of stereotyping. Situations that may arise in ABE because of stereotyping are:

   a. The trainee may identify ethnically/culturally different clients by stereotypes. Assuming, in that process, that those clients possess all the attributes belonging to the stereotypes of their group. This negates their individuality and establishes a barrier to genuine communication in that situation
   b. The clients may stereotype the trainee as a certain type of person who is indicative of the mainstream. This negates (assuming the clients have negative concepts of the mainstream) much of the effectiveness the trainee can offer as a:

      1. Person
      2. Counselor
      3. Instructor
      4. Resource agent

   c. Both the clients and trainee may fail to distinguish between statements about a class of persons in thought, and actual perception of individuals they meet face-to-face. This is most likely to occur when they are provided only with ethnic and/or cultural identification and no other information. When that happens, people tend to ignore individual differences and respond to the group only as a stereotype

Part C

You might want to do the activities in this section.

1. Because of the diverse kinds of people in ABE, many of them will have been identified by stereotypes in the past. ABE is not the place to perpetuate such discrimination. Do these approaches to attack the rigid nature of stereotypes so they are not a part of your ABE setting:

   a. When you hear stereotyping statements being made, continue the discussion, asking for a more precise definition of the group being stereotyped. Point out discrepancies between abstract and observable traits
   b. Encourage critical discussion of stereotypes that includes:

      1. analysis of generalizations
      2. role plays and/or discussion of hypothetical situations
      3. if possible, sharing of personal experiences that can illuminate legitimate reasons for behavior that either reinforces or challenges the stereotypes

c. Make culturally relative materials readily available to:

   1. increase awareness of actual traits
   2. indicate ethnic/cultural differences that can be informative and enlightening
   3. create an appreciation of the group in question and instill pride in those present who are members of that group

d. Lessen the rigidity and negatively exaggerated aspects of stereotypes by discussing the fact that predominately favorable stereotypes have unfavorable aspects, and vice versa

e. Scrutinize your own use of stereotyping by:

   1. listing your feelings about the particular groups represented in your ABE setting. Go carefully over those lists to determine if they include the aspects of a stereotype as described in Part A
   2. Be aware of your communication process with clients. Answer these questions:

      a. Are you initially operating from the basis of the clients' fundamental human worth?
      b. Are you concentrating on what the clients say, not how they look?
      c. Are you concentrating on comprehending what the clients <u>mean before</u> they have finished their conversation with you?
      d. Are you trying to determine or assist the clients in determining their needs and desires in ABE, or do you assume you already know those? Such basic assumptions are perpetrators of stereotypes and can be damaging to a client as well as false
      e. Are you flexible in allowing time for the clients to act as individuals in the communication process, as well as in the learning experiences in ABE? or do you dictate methods of communication?
      f. Do you feel clients have a unique experiential base that is valid, and to be respected?
      g. Do you feel all your clients are diverse persons who may or may not share goals for as many different reasons as there are clients?
      h. Do you visualize each client with positive and/or negative qualities as you get to know them?

D. Source List for further reading for Module 9.1 (Optional)

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MODULE 9.2

TOPIC

Identify specific cultural barriers to affective communication with Native Americans.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

The trainee will be able to recognize and identify some specific cultural traits which may create communication barriers to effective instructing/ counseling with Indian people.

RATIONALE

Within the ABE setting that includes Indians, whether you are a counselor or an instructor, you will probably become aware of significant cultural differences. To see that such differences do not impede communication, you must be aware of them, and visualize their potential influence upon interaction. Awareness of cultural differences might help you to relate positively to Indians. Then, the differences will not necessarily exist as barriers.

PREASSESSMENT

List, with eighty percent accuracy, a minimum of five traditionalist cultural traits of Indians. Indicate at least one specific characteristic of each trait you list which might affect communication.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Learning Activity One

Read the explanations and definitions of terms in the Appended Materials.

Learning Activity Two

Read the notes from the author in the Appended Materials.

Learning Activity Three

Read materials #1 - 8 for (1) information about specific traditionalist cultural traits, (2) situations that might occur during interaction with Indians because of those cultural traits, (3) some optional activities you might do to better acquaint yourself with the Indian community, or to increase your awareness of your Indian clients.

Learning Activity Four

Note source list for further optional reading.

POSTASSESSMENT

(1) Complete the Preassessment with eighty percent accuracy.

(2) List at least one approach or behavior for at least five cultural traits you think might lessen the possibility of such traits becoming barriers to effective communication.

(3) List at least five ways this module has either reinforced or changed your perspective about Indian people.

Note: (2) and (3) ideally should be done with your supervisor. It that is not possible, completing (2) and (3) may still be of value by giving you the opportunity to articulate your perspective in writing.

APPENDED MATERIALS

A. Explanation and Definitions of Terms

Non-Indian counselor/instructor will be referred to as trainee throughout this module.

Indian counselee/students will be referred to as clients.

The cultural differences discussed in this module are limiting because they are generalized and traditionalist (the "old" ways). Such differences will very greatly between and among clients because of varying degrees of acculturation, and the existence of cross-culture and bi-culture people. Tribes of Indians vary, as do cultural traits in urban and/or rural areas. The traits discussed in this module are indicative of Pan Indianism, and felt to be a valid base for cultural awareness. The trainee is expected to realize the general nature of the traits discussed, and to apply all or part of the information in the module as may be realistic to their own situation.

The information in this module is basically for the trainee who is inexperienced and unaware when it comes to working with Indian people.

B. Notes from the author

The author has had a number of years experience teaching and counseling Indian persons on a reservation. This module incorporates both that experience and the author's personal philosophy based on cultural relativity. The thrust of this module is, therefore, to create or reinforce an equalizing situation for Indians in ABE. Their past negative school experiences are most evident to them. They do not need more of the same.

If Indians' identities stem largely from their cultural heritage (the author believes that is often the case), the act of actively acknowledging and respecting that heritage and interaction will encourage positive self-identity and confidence from them. Then, learning basic skills, as well as being able to survive and interact as independent persons in terms of society can follow. Developing such a culturally relative situation is the trainee's challenge. Societal "survival tools" are part of the challenge, but, trust and culturally meaningful communication must come first.

The affective nature of this module makes it very hard to measure, if it can even be measured. However, the difficulty of a task by no means lessens the importance of it, or the necessity of its existence.

C. #1 Indian Time

Part A

Read the following information to learn some characteristics of Indian time.

1. Often in Indian languages there were no words for time, wait, or late. Time is simply "with us" to Indians.

2. Indians often feel relationships supersede time.

3. Indians often do not think of time in terms of being able to use or misuse it.

    a. They often see it as like air, flowing through things as air does
    b. Indians often don't break time into past, present, or future
    c. To a great degree, Indians' division of time is nebulous, happening with season change and harvesting
    d. Time can be directly related to sociability for Indians. Tribal or family matters could likely take precedence over a job, or attending school on time and/or everyday all day

Part B

Read the following to learn about some situations and/or feelings that might arise because of Indian time. To deal with the traditionalist Indian concept of time without negatively affecting trainee's relationships, there are a number of things to possibly consider:

1. Keep in mind that it might take a long time to be trusted by Indian clients if they don't know you well. Just being together in ABE will not necessarily cause good communication. Appointments for counseling may be disregarded, or the client may come days late. This doesn't mean the client isn't interested, doesn't like you as a person, is irresponsible, or non-communicative.

    a. It may simply mean the session hasn't happened yet, that "now" hasn't occurred
    b. It may mean the client wasn't feeling ready to communicate with the trainee in a counseling situation
    c. Lateness or lack of attendance aren't meant as a personal affront in most cases

2. As a trainee, be available a certain number of hours on a regular basis. Preferably, don't change that schedule throughout the year.

3. Let the clients know class/counseling hours in as many ways as possible. (BIA, stores, Community Center)

4. Also, indicate to them a place or phone number you could be reached other than your regularly scheduled hours.

5. In other words, #3 and #4 indicate that you must adjust your availability to "Indian time" for Indian clients. At the same time, you will be expected to maintain Anglo time on the job.

6. Realization that Indian time may not change may help you adjust to it, accept its existence, and not get chagrined or tense when it runs contrary to your upbringing via non-Indian time. Over a period of time such adjustments are likely to happen.

Part C

You might want to do these things so the Indian concept of time is not an impediment to your program, potentially or otherwise.

1. Post class hours in the learning facility, Indian community center, stores, BIA, and other places clients may suggest to you.

2. Keep attendance in a careful, but not judgmental manner.

3. Strongly reinforce prompt and regular attendance.

4. Do not stress tardiness or lack of attendance.

C. #2 Traditional Indian sense of "Cohesiveness"

Read this section that deals with the Indian sense of cohesiveness or "we-ness" which might affect clients' lives and is often an extremely important part of their culture.

Part A

1. Indian people often live and are part of a close-knit group which encompasses their extended family and friends within the tribe and in the area they reside.

2. Indian people are often lost outside their significant group. This is true because:

   a. Each individual is important to that group
   b. People gain their sense of individuality through and because of the group

c. Persons aren't only merged into the group, but all share equally within the group
d. The social identities of Indians are often built around their places in the group and the relationships they have with other group members. Such social identities are generally nurtured and maintained on a lifelong basis
e. Value is often placed upon group members being equal in status and in terms of "Indianness"
f. So, the Indian is usually considered a member of his/her group as a whole, but not submerged by it; as he/she is respected in his/her own right from childhood on and learns to respect others in a similar fashion

Part B

Read this section to visualize how the Indian's sense of "we-ness" can affect the counseling/teaching situation with non-Indian trainees and Indian clients.

1. Because of this concept of "we-ness," Indians often approach people as equal, one person to another. Communication exists to Indians that way, with differences being accepted, but not constantly regarded. Our non-Indian Anglo structure of differences (in class, education, status) affecting our communication might not be understood by the Indian clients. They will not necessarily look to you as a trainee, but simply as another person.

2. The ABE situation may be difficult for Indians, because it will expect people to think and act largely in terms of themselves, not in terms of their group.

   a. This is evident in attempting to determine individual education goals or to encourage participation during discussions in ABE
   b. Anonymity has often been taught as a preferred trait to Indians, and carrying individuality too far as an undesirable trait. Thus, thinking in terms of oneself often has a sanctioning connotation
   c. To receive extra attention or praise can sometimes make an Indian feel on unequal and unacceptable grounds in terms of his/her group
   d. The disclosure of one's own personal problems or challenges to a trainee may be interpreted by the Indian client as being too little a part of their Indian group to be acceptable to it
   e. The client's hesitance to interact in ABE as an individual may be from fear of group disapproval, whether the client wants to participate or not. The choice to the Indian client will be

whether or not their wish to participate is worth the risk of possible group disapproval. That is no easy choice to make.

3. Group interaction within the ABE setting is one way to offer a viable alternative to his quandry.

   a. This group interaction should be on an informal and if possible spontaneous basis. The less official it seems, the greater the likelihood of participation on the part of the Indian clients
   b. Group interaction should occur with the trainee as mainly a listener and occasional facilitator
   c. Three kinds of situations do not lend themselves to the group approach:

      1. If the client has a very personal or traumatic problem and needs privacy
      2. During advising of <u>personal</u> educational goals in an individualized program
      3. Interaction as friends outside of ABE

<u>Part C</u>

1. You might want to do some of these activities. By inquiry or checking a service directory, make a list of social agencies on the reservation, or that deal directly with your Indian clients' center of activities.

   a. For each agency you list, also note a contact person there
   b. Contact the persons and explain your program to them
   c. Ask for input from them concerning needs of the clients, ways they feel your program could be more effective, and over-all suggestions

2. Contact the tribal Education Committee and/or tribal board to present your program and to receive their official verification of your existence. Have interested Indian clients or teachers accompany you when you do this.

   a. Make your presentation friendly, informal, and to the point
   b. Invite everyone to your learning facility; making sure they know when it is open
   c. Stress the fact that all ages of people participate in ABE, and that more than one member of a family might be part of ABE

(<u>Author's note</u>: As a non-Indian, you will find problems and challenges more easily and quickly solved if you "work through" Indian people within the community. These contact persons are a good place to begin establishing such relationships.)

3. Try to attend and participate in as many Indian activities as you are invited to, or that are open to the public. This can indicate your interest and commitment to the people. Your sharing in their activities may encourage them to participate in ABE.

4. Develop realistic optional units that include:

   a. Group activities
   b. Consumer education
   c. The procedures of budgeting for a family

   (Note: Resource people will be necessary to make such units viable in terms of the needs and socio-economic situation of your clients.)

C. #3 The Non-verbal cue — eye contact

Part A

1. Eye contact can be the source of misunderstanding between non-Indians and very traditionalist Indians.

   a. Indians could feel direct eye contact is embarrassing to the other individual; whereas, non-Indians might feel direct eye contact is necessary for "truly" meaningful communication
   b. To be courteous and considerate, a traditionalist Indian will look away from the person he/she speaks to
   c. Often, if a traditionalist Indian looks directly at someone, it is because they see them as offensive, and look through them as if they didn't exist; whereas, non-Indians often consider someone who won't look directly at them when speaking as being "shifty-eyed" or evasive

Part B

Read this section to be able to visualize situations that may arise from eye contact or lack of it.

1. In the more traditionalist Indian families, eye contact can be a barrier to communication in the ABE situation.

2. Those clients less traditional are accustomed to and accepting of non-Indian ways and will not misinterpret direct eye contact with an Anglo.

3. You have to meet the challenge of this situation by handling the initial contact with Indian clients very carefully.

a. Keep in mind that there may be no way for you to know how traditionalist the person is
b. Encourage the client to establish the extent of eye contact and follow suit
c. Keep in mind that the variable for lack of eye contact may not be the degree of a client's traditionalism, because such behavior may cease after a relationship is established

C. #4 Indian use of Silence and Verbosity

Part A

1. Non-Indians often react to unstructured silence by trying to fill it in any way possible. Indians will often remain silent until they can assess what is going on and how it relates to them.

2. To Indians, a social visit with no verbal interaction might be entirely possible and acceptable.

3. Non-Indians often speak directly into silence. Indians often see such an invasion of silence as meaningless.
   a. They might likely have been taught that silence is meaningful and comfortable
   b. They might likely have been taught to listen well, and to take time to do so
   c. Being articulate isn't necessarily a superior trait to Indians as it is to Anglos
   d. Indians often treat speech as a perilous gift to be used carefully, that the fruits of silence are self-control, patience, endurance, and dignity

4. Silent Indian clients may indicate:
   a. The client may be thinking and waiting to speak until his/her thoughts are organized
   b. The client simply has nothing to say right then and is comfortable in silence

5. Non-Indians uneasiness with silence may be misinterpreted by Indian clients as an intrusion into their thoughts.

Part B

Read this section to visualize situations in which overcoming the use and misuse of silence in the ABE setting with Indian clients can be approached or expected to occur:

1. You might have to listen a lot and say little.

2. There may be pauses minutes long between questions and answers. This might be particularly true with older Indians and they will often be expected to and expect to speak if they are present at a gathering.

3. Silence must often be treated as a very real part of the interaction in the ABE setting. It can be a culturally meaningful phenomenon. Many English words might be culturally meaningless to Indians, and there are many Indian concepts that cannot be articulated with English words. Consequently, silence may be the substitute for the words which are not there to express unique Indian thoughts or ideas.

4. Because Indians communicate in English does not necessarily mean that the accompanying values, customs, and manners of English have been incorporated into their lives.

Part C

You might want to do some of these things to develop your approach to communication in relation to silence and verbosity with Indian clients.

1. Speak relatively slowly.

2. If the client seems puzzled, explain the concept another way.

3. If the client doesn't answer you, mention that if there are any questions the client could ask them any time. Then go on to other things.

4. Bring things you can quietly work on while class is in progress. Sometimes there may be no verbal interaction for some time. If that is the case, keep busy, but available.

5. Be sure to make your explanations to the point. That doesn't necessarily mean brief.

C. #5 Indian Use of "Small Talk"

Read this section to gain information on how small talk is often used by the non-Indian trainee to set clients at ease. That is not likely to happen with an Indian. The phenomenon of "small talk" is an entity often separate from the Indian use of silence and verbosity, although both cultural traits may be affecting the same situation at the same time.

Part A

1. Non-Indians often pepper silence with small talk. The non-Indian might try to fill silence with small talk because he/she feels uncomfortable. Indians often speak when their thoughts are connected and organized. They often feel it is courteous to not speak, unless there is something worthwhile to say. Indians tend to speak straight to the point, frankly, directly, and wasting no words. They often feel they need fewer words than non-Indians.

2. Non-Indian counselors often feel small talk will set a client at ease. Indians will sometimes view small talk as meaningless and superficial.

3. The counselor's use of small talk is to set the client at ease. The Indian clients may view the trainee's employment of small talk as meaning the trainee doesn't value his/her words. Therefore, from the client's viewpoint, the trainee is seen as not trustworthy to share one's feelings with.

4. Small talk usually consists of remarks and questions. Indians may interpret simple, well-meaning remarks, or questions as rude and obnoxious curiosity. Such inquiries might be seen as no one's business but their own. They will usually share the information they wish to without being asked.

5. Keep in mind that many Indian people are acculturated so that "small talk" doesn't bother them. If your clients are not traditionalist, "small talk" will likely not be a problem to you.

Part B

Read this section so you can visualize situations and/or feelings that might arise from the use of "small talk." Using small talk with Indians can cause at least two things to happen.

1. The client may not return to ABE.

2. If the client returns, it is likely they will not readily disclose their questions or feelings, and might be much less inclined to interact.

3. You might employ other techniques than small talk to establish communication.

   a. Tolerate silence, knowing the client will say what he/she wishes when ready to do do
   b. Listen carefully when the client speaks. Indian clients will tell you exactly what is on their minds
   c. Respond to what they say, being as direct as they are

C. #6 Indians and Humor

Part A

Read this information on Indians and humor.

1. Indians often communicate a great deal through humor.

   a. Traditionally, they feel too straight a face is uncomfortable
   b. They often feel to laugh at oneself or with others brings good feelings and relaxation
   c. Traditionally, Indians often used humor as a form of social control

Part B

Read this to be able to visualize some situations and/or feelings that humor nurtures.

1. If Indian clients see and feel that the trainee is able to relax and laugh at himself or herself, as well as with them, the clients may seem more willing to disclose feelings and to ask questions. This fosters an equality basis conducive to the Indian concept of interaction.

2. Humor is a feeling all people share. It is a positive base upon which to build a relationship. Status differences between trainee and clients need to be at a minimum for this to occur.

Part C

You might want to do these things:

1. Feel free to share humorous exchanges with your Indian clients.

2. Until you know your clients well, do not make them recepients of humor. Rather, make yourself or circumstances the objects of the humor you engage in.

C. #7 Traditionalist Indian Values

Read this to increase your awareness of traditionalist Indian values which may impede effective communication in the ABE setting.

Part A

1. Keep in mind that no matter the behavior shown in ABE, the Indian clients may live and think a most different cultural existence elsewhere. Many Indians feel they must be as non-Indian as possible in the presence of a non-Indian.

2. Indians have often been brought up to believe that accepting group sanctions is the way to live. However, if they tend to accept only Indianness, they might have great difficulty surviving in Anglo society. Examples are:

   a. Their children may be disciplined for Indian ways. Example: If they miss school the day after a pow wow their parents took them to. Such social activities as pow wows are considered very important to Indians and more important than school
   b. Indians might ignore or tease one who behaves in an undesirable manner. They often do not withdraw pleasures or punish as non-Indians do. Yet, at school their offspring may be disciplined in the non-Indian manner for Indian behavior.

3. Indians often interact on a "now" basis, in which no one is more important than another. Thus, they might desire and see little predictability in social behavior or personal relationships. Consequently, non-Indian degrees of class and status might be confusing to them. There are tribal positions of assigned power, but people holding those positions often make decisions concerning the whole tribe, not individuals.

Part B

Read this to visualize possible approaches to bridge communication gaps created by such differences.

1. Create a student-centered situation.

   a. Independent study that may be individualized or group-oriented, depending upon the goals the clients determine

b. Have choices of materials and programs for clients to determine
c. Have it flexible, so clients may change programs or goals and will work at their own rate
d. Arrange it so students can work in groups or alone, whichever is comfortable for them
e. Act as a resource person, helping the clients visualize alternatives and different perspectives as they reach for success, and ask for assistance
f. Consider failure as non-existent in such a situation by stressing only positive gains. See success as extremely relative and measured by the clients' standards
g. Nurture this allowing atmosphere so clients can learn from their own perspectives, have success while doing so, and therefore, experience learning that is truly theirs. This is difficult because the bulk of the responsibility is on the student. The client must: (1) be motivated, (2) initiate and choose their own goals, (3) attend, (4) do the achieving. You can make sure this is viable by: (1) being available and willing to help, (2) have excellent materials and programs, (3) keep in mind that much of the lives of Indian clients have been determined by others. So, self-actualization is new and a challenge, (4) remember Indian time—it will take time. Keep in mind there may be many other variables affecting the clients' daily lives.

Part C

You might want to do these activities to create an atmosphere relative to Indian traditionalist values.

1. Design enrichment activities that are to stress the social as well as educational aspects of ABE. These can be listed on a bulletin board you create. Include:

   a. A current list of books you have available for anyone to check out that are by, for, and/or about Indians. Any books you can find relating to the particular group of Indian people in the program must be included
   b. If you can, have a day care available for students' children. Mention that people other than students could be involved in story hours, activities, and etc.
   c. Put up notices of enrichment programs and/or speakers that are relative to the community. Invite everyone, not just the client population. Client input should determine the speakers and resource people to invite

2. Have an open house for the entire community. Serve refreshments and plan the event with the clients.

3. Print a colorful brochure describing the program and some of its goals.

   a. Discuss with clients the brochure's format and the kinds of things they would include in it. Make some suggestions, but respect and include their ideas
   b. Print it in easily understood words and with simplistic organization
   c. Print it on colored paper if possible so it is an "eye-catcher"
   d. Make it available throughout the community at stores, the BIA, the community center, and wherever else clients would suggest
   e. Encourage clients to distribute the brochure and/or to take some home to share with others in their families
   f. In this brochure, emphasize the sharing, enjoying, and positive accomplishment aspects of ABE. Do not picture it only as work
   g. Make this brochure as culturally relevant as you can. Do not allow it to appear simply as an extension of the non-Indian educational system

C. #8 Traditionalist Indian reaction to confrontation

Read this to gain information on how confrontation can be a barrier to effective communication in the ABE situation with Indian clients.

Part A

1. Indians are turned off by confrontation. Anglos are taught to face up to things and defend themselves.

2. An Anglo may interpret Indian's withdrawal from confrontation as timidity, irresponsibility, or a tendency to shun reality. Indians may interpret confronting someone as rude and the confronter as someone not worth talking with.

Part B

Read this to visualize how confrontation can create particular situations with Indian clients.

1. It is felt that confronting Indian clients is not worthwhile. There are other techniques more effective.

2. If confrontation seems to be the only way to solve a situation, it should be positive.

   a. The candor involved will be accepted by the student
   b. Ultimatums will undo the situation further. Rather, different options and approaches need to be pinpointed and discussed with the client to alleviate the immediate situation

Part C

1. You might want to do these things to incorporate a non-confronting approach to solve problems or challenges:

   a. Discussing the situation with the group in general about a hypothetical example of the problem
   b. Privately asking advice of the person involved as how to solve the problem
   c. Quietly ignoring the problem and concentrating on reinforcing the positive behavior and of the client(s) involved

C. #9 One way to become acquainted with the Indian community in a positive manner

Part A

Read this section to gain some information that might offer some insight to a non-Indian trainee with Indian clients.

For Indian clients to gain understanding of themselves in relation to their group as well as to the larger society, they probably need to discover their rights, assets, and identities. They may need to be able to harmonize Indian and non-Indian systems. If they experience value conflicts, they need to realize that the society has liabilities as well as assets, and that Indianness has assets as well as liabilities in order to survive. To assess their own place in society, Indians most likely need to understand their heritage. To assume a place within society, they will probably have to assess both Anglo and Indian relevance. Part of our relationships with Indians might include an exchange of values and perspectives. This could offer edification to members of both our groups. It may also serve to enlighten both to visualize more realistically the cultural differences we are all facing and coping with. Individuals involved must not base their perspectives on value judgments formed from stereotypes. It should be kept in mind that until now, communication between non-Indians and Indians has often been less than satisfactory. Overcoming that phenomenon is no small task.

As non-Indian trainees, we must try to demolish our stereotypes of Indians, and yet deal realistically with cultural differences by being aware of them, sensitive in trying to understand them, and above all, respecting them. We will possibly represent the mainstream to our Indian clients. That may initially create negative feelings and we may feel at an unfair disadvantage. At the same time, the neutrality of being non-Indian can also be a positive situation.

To evaluate cultural differences discussed in this module, you must assess and define the particular differences you deal with, and also the degree to which those differences are barriers. This module has given you a starting point. Remember, that you are the go-between. You will be dealing with the community at large as well as with your Indian clients. As long as Indian people are misunderstood or considered unacceptable to the community, the option of success for them is minimal.

Interview an Indian member of either the (1) Tribal Board of Trustees, (2) the Reservation Education Committee, or (3) any committee dealing with Indian concerns. Ask questions directly related to your area of interest. Example: If you are in ABE, ask things concerning (1) assets and deficiencies of current reservation program, (2) needs in terms of the facility used or the materials needed, and etc. When the interview is complete, describe and define to yourselt at least four characteristics you can identify of the Indian culture that you felt affected communication during the interview.

D. Source List for Further Reading for Module 9.2 (Optional)

Aberle, Sophie D. and William Brophy. The Indian, America's Unfinished Business. Norman, Oklahoma: U of Oklahoma Press, 1966.

Brown, Dee. Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee.

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DeLoria, Vine, Jr. Custer Died for Your Sins.

Driver. Indians of North America.

Hall. The Silent Language. Fawcett, 1959.

Henry, Jeannette. Textbooks and the American Indian. San Francisco: Indian Historian Press, 1970.

Josephy, Alvin M. The Indian Heritage of America. New York: Alfred Knopf, 1968.

Josephy. Red Power; The American Indian's Fight for Freedom.

McLuhan, T. C., ed. Touch the Earth.

Nerhardt, John. Black Elk Speaks

Rothenberg, Jerome, ed. Shaking the Pumpkin.

Ruby and Brown. The Cayuse Indians.

Washburn. Red Man's Land/White Man's Law: A Study of the Past and Present Status of the American Indian.

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Zintz, Miles, ed. Education Across Cultures. Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall Hunt, 1969.

MODULE 9.3

TOPIC

Identify specific cultural barriers to effective communication with Chicanos.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

The trainee will be able to recognize and identify some specific cultural traits which might create communication barriers to effective communication with Mexican-American people.

RATIONALE

Within the ABE setting that includes Mexican-Americans, whether you are a counselor or instructor, you will probably become aware of significant cultural differences. To see that such differences do not impede communication, you must be aware of them, and visualize their potential influence upon interaction. Awareness of such cultural differences might help you to relate positively to Mexican-Americans. Then, the differences will not necessarily exist as barriers.

PREASSESSMENT

List, with eighty percent accuracy, a minimum of five cultural traits of Mexican-Americans. Indicate at least one specific characteristic of each trait you list which might affect communication.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Learning Activity One

Read the explanations and definitions of terms in the Appended Materials.

Learning Activity Two

Read the notes from the author in the Appended Materials.

Learning Activity Three

Read materials #1 - 8 for: (1) information about specific Mexican-American cultural traits, (2) situations that might occur during interaction with Mexican-Americans because of those traits, (3) some optional activities you might do to better acquaint yourself with the Mexican-American community, or to increase your awareness of your Mexican-American clients.

Learning Activity Four

Note source list for further optional reading.

POSTASSESSMENT

(1) Complete the Preassessment with eighty percent accuracy.

(2) List at least one approach or behavior for at least five cultural traits you think might lessen the possibility of such traits becoming barriers to effective communication.

(3) List at least five ways this module has either reinforced or changed your perspective about Mexican-American people.

Note: (2) and (3) ideally should be done with your supervisor. If that is not possible, completing (2) and (3) may still be of value by giving you the opportunity to articulate your perspective in writing.

APPENDED MATERIALS

A. Explanation and definitions of terms

The counselor/instructor will be referred to as trainee throughout this module.

Mexican-American counselee/students will be referred to as clients.

The information in this module is basically for the trainee who is inexperienced and unaware in terms of working with Mexican-American people.

The hyphenated term Anglo-American is used with the hyphenated term Mexican-American to equalize these titles. Anglo-American generally is used in this module to keynote the tone of mainstream society. Using the term Mexican-American is limiting because students may prefer to be called Chicanos or Spanish-Americans. It is felt that the information in the module is valid for persons with any of those preferences. For continuity, Mexican-American is used throughout. Keep in mind, though, that such titles are not necessarily interchangeable, and clients may have strong feelings about being called one rather than another.

Some Mexican-American cultural traits will be defined and discussed in this module as potential barriers to effective communication. The traits discussed are only examples of some Mexican-American cultural traits. They have been chosen as examples to increase one's awareness, and are considered a valid base for understanding Mexican-Americans. The traits discussed are very general, and limiting because of that. It must be kept in mind that there are great differences between individuals, specific groups of people, and locale (rural or urban). You are expected to take the general nature of these traits into account, and to apply all or part of the information in the module as it seems realistic in terms of the Mexican-American population you work with.

B. Notes from the author

The author has had a number of experiences teaching and counseling Mexican-American persons. This module incorporates both that experience and my personal philosophy. The thrust of this module is to create or reinforce an equalizing situation for Mexican-Americans. Their past negative experiences are most evident to them. They need no more of that.

If Mexican-Americans' identities stem largely from their cultural heritage (the author believes that is often the case); the act of actively becoming aware of and acknowledging that heritage will encourage positive self-identify and confidence from them. Then, learning basic skills, as well

as being able to survive and interact as an independent person in terms of society can follow. Developing such a situation is your challenge, and the objective of this module. Societal "survival tools" are included in this challenge, but, trust and culturally relative meaningful communication must occur first.

The affective nature of this module makes it very hard to measure, if it can be measured at all. However, the difficulty of a task by no means lessens the importance of it, or the necessity of its existence.

C. #1 Mexican-American Family Loyalty

Part A

Read the following information which describes Mexican-American family loyalty.

1. Family loyalty in the Mexican-American culture often encompasses maintaining intense emotional and physical attachments to one's entire family and the places and things attached to the family. Mexican-American people often keep strong physical and metaphorical family roots because of this.
    a. The needs of the family often supersede the needs of individual members
    b. The family often captures all of the significant social relations of the individual
    c. It is often considered shameful for a person to seek aid or relationships outside the extended family circle. One's first loyalty is often to the family and the collective pride therein
    d. Many Mexican-American persons often turn to the family group as their source of advice
    e. One's honor and respect are often associated with one's lack of obligation, attachment to, or indebtedness outside of the family circle

Part B

Read how family loyalty is often important to the Mexican-American clients.

1. Several items in Part A will affect how the clients interpret participation in ABE. Awareness of communication gaps that may arise because of this follow:
    a. If the client's family priorities come first, clients may miss class to tend to family needs. To them, this is an unquestioned

obligation. The Anglo-American obligation to go to school no matter what may not be understood or valued by Mexican-Americans and should not necessarily be expected of them or imposed on them

b. The family's pressure upon a client might curtail the degree of participation that person has in ABE regardless of the client's personal desires or wishes. It may be a traumatic decision for the client to come to ABE. There is often opposition to or restriction of individual's activities with outside groups or people

c. Since Mexican-Americans often spend and feel obligated to spend a larger part of their time with their family and neighbors than middle class Anglo-Americans, they may feel they have limited time for ABE

d. The strong physical and emotional attachments in the Mexican-American family tend to create low mobility, and a resistance to change. Ideas and perspectives encountered in ABE may be difficult for the clients to understand, let along accept. Time will be prerequisite to acquisition of such things. Some kinds of information will be rejected because of this cultural difference

e. Implied also in (d) above, is that Mexican-Americans will not only be less capable of absorbing new values, but also it will be difficult for them to establish and maintain relationships with new kinds of people. The trainee and ABE will both be new to the clients. Simply, the challenge of being in ABE and associating with the trainee will be an initial, though unstated goal for the client

f. Often, the sole resource for financial and other aid is the kin group. That may drain the financial and emotional resources of mobile family members, who could likely be your clients. Such a drain can also inhibit some family members from availing themselves of alternative resources (like ABE) in the general society

Part C

You may choose to do some of these activities that may help in overcoming the potential communication barriers listed in Part B.

1. At the beginning of the school year:

   a. Arrange it so you can speak at the church and/or community center or a similar gathering place in the Mexican-American community

      1. Have your Mexican-American aide(s) accompany you to translate and to introduce <u>you</u> to the people

2. Make your presentation informal and friendly. Be informative if the opportunity presents itself
3. Invite families to your learning facility; making sure they know when it is open
4. Stress the fact that all ages of people participate in ABE, and that more than one member of a family might be part of ABE

2. Try to attend and participate in as many activities of the Mexican-American community as you are invited to or that are open to the public. This can indicate your interest and commitment to the people. Your sharing in their activities may encourage them to participate in ABE.

3. Develop realistic optional learning units that center around:

   a. family activities
   b. consumer education
   c. budgeting for family needs
   d. the importance of one's family

   (Note: Resource people from the Mexican-American community may be necessary and are certainly desirable to help you with this.)

C. #2 Male/Female Roles

Part A

1. Read this section to learn some ways how male/female roles in the Mexican-American culture are clearly defined.

   a. Males are often the absolute figureheads of the family
   b. Males are usually free to socialize with outsiders more widely than females
   c. Females mostly socialize with relatives as their source of recreation or contacts
   d. Females are often discouraged from going to school. They are to be submissive, learn household tasks, and care for children as their goals in life
   e. Machismo (sexual virility) is often very much a part of the male Mexican-American. It often involves domination over affairs of family, especially one's wife, and whatever extra-marital relationships one has. This role of specific desired masculine traits is often nurtured early and reinforced by peers and family. It does not usually include a stress on one's intellectual abilities

Part B

1. Read this section to gain information about how the Mexican-American concept of male/female roles can affect ABE. What should you be aware of to know what is happening or may happen?

   a. If the trainee is female, she may appear as the antithesis of "what women should be" to a Mexican-American client. She may seem authoritarian, businesslike, and aggressive instead of nurturing, sensitive, and submissive

      1. It may be difficult for Mexican-American male clients to take her seriously
      2. He may feel if he does take her seriously that his machismo will be lessened or threatened, particularly in others' eyes
      3. He may find it difficult to function in class, even though he wants to because the situation may seem and feel like a parody to him
      4. He may misinterpret friendliness on her part as having other connotations
      5. Female Mexican-American clients may view the female trainee as missing the "important" things to females. They will probably not have trouble taking her seriously because of some of the things they have in common with her, even though they may usually think of males as authority figures

   b. Female Mexican-Americans have generally been discouraged from attending school and taught that academe is not part of their femaleness

      1. The decision to go to school or participate there may be difficult for them
      2. They may have inner negative feelings of deserting old traditions
      3. They may see their participation in ABE as running the risk of being unacceptable and unattractive to the "old" ways
      4. If they feel negative about their association in ABE, and also doubt their intellectual abilities, it may be doubly difficult for them to attain new flexibility in their learning as well as in themselves. Such reevaluation can be painful, confusing, and frustrating
      5. Assuming female Mexican-Americans do become involved in ABE, their participation there may be limited if they feel intimidated or dominated by male Mexican-Americans who are also in class

6. Keep in mind that the clearly defined male/female roles are often seen by many Mexican-Americans as inherently right and not to be questioned

Part C

You may want to complete either of these activities to deal with communication gaps resulting from Mexican-American male/female roles.

1. Design optional units for clients that include:
   a. Create learning activities geared toward the basic skills (reading, math, Spanish/English) that can be worked on at home as well as in the learning facility. These materials could involve oral or written responses
   b. Have realistic and practical information available that deals with economical home repair, "how to" units, and nutrition hints. These units should also involve the clients' ideas and require thought processes to assimilate them. They should not be simply sources of information

C. #3 Bilingual Challenges

Part A

Read this section for information about bilingual people.

1. Language is a good guide to the way a person perceives events and objects in the world about them. It is an effective tool for learning. To negate one's language is to negatively affect that person's identity and self-esteem.
   a. Mexican-American cherish Spanish as part of themselves, their families, their traditions, and the culture to which they belong. So, there learning should include their language
   b. Spanish is their native tongue, not a foreign language
   c. There is no reason why both Spanish and English cannot enhance an ABE setting

Part B

Study this section to gain information about the challenges of teaching English as a second language.

1. The following explain some past incorrect and devastating attitudes toward bilingual people, specifically, Spanish-speaking people.

a. Anglo-Americans have often viewed being bilingual as an extreme virtue in middle-class educated people, but decried the use of any language other than English in education as unacceptable. That is an ambivalent, intolerant, and unimaginative opinion which has done a great deal of damage to bilingual persons seeking education
b. Educators have often seen bilingualism as being detrimental to intellectual functioning and thus to success in school. This is false. Being bilingual can afford one a unique wealth of knowledge and communication not otherwise available. However, for that to happen, both languages must be accepted and respected, not just tolerated

2. The following are things to keep in mind with your bilingual students in the ABE setting.

a. At first, using two languages will take students more time and they may experience slow progress. That is no indication of the mental capacities of the clients. There are many rates of communication and learning, all valid. They are as distinct as the individuals involved
b. Remember that students may have to:

1. translate from one language to another
2. think in one language first and then in another
3. relearn whole new concepts in a new language

c. Students may be limited experientially with English. You cannot criticize them for lack of fluency. Encourage them instead for their accomplishments and efforts
d. Call your students by their Spanish names unless they ask you otherwise. To anglicize their names can be insulting. They will understand your attempts to pronounce Spanish correctly!
e. Students may have inferior feelings about their ability to speak English because of bad past experiences and little practice. This may cause them to be hesitant to discuss things during class, or to ask you questions. Communicate both in Spanish and English. The former to provide communication that is easily understood by them and can offer them the verbal information to solve problems. Then, later learning the amount of English necessary for survival within the mainstream can be approached as a viable task
f. Remember that people can read English without comprehending what they are reading. That is another reason why both Spanish and English must be part of this ABE setting. ABE is a last or only chance at education for many. It is no time to overlook giant gaps in communication or to negate the validity of one's cultural heritage by neglecting the language of that heritage

3. The following deal with difficulties in translating Spanish to English and vice versa.

   a. There are untranslatable words
   b. The translator needs to have an awareness of the particular area of knowledge being translated
   c. Slang and colloquialisms lose flavor in translation
   d. Proper word combinations are difficult in translation
   e. Idiomatic expressions are untranslatable
   f. Cognates, words that sound or look alike, may be pitfalls
   g. Translating fron one language to another may require creation of new words to convey meanings
   h. Competent translation takes a great deal of time
   i. Letters (a) through (h) above indicate only some of the challenges of language your Mexican-American clients face as under-educated persons hoping to succeed in ABE. Keeping these obstacles in mind will increase your understanding of their viewpoints, and hopefully facilitate in making ABE more realistic for them

Part C

You may choose to do some of these activities with or for your Spanish-speaking students.

1. Obtain a paperback Spanish/English Dictionary:

   a. For yourself
   b. For each of your clients

2. Devise an instructional sheet for use of the dictionary.

   a. Include both English and Spanish instructions on the same sheet
   b. Make three sets of instructions:

      1. Primary level
      2. Middle level
      3. High school level

3. Have reading materials readily available in a number of levels that are of adult interest and in both languages. Use culturally relevant materials whenever you can find them. Try to find books and articles by Mexican-Americans.

4. If you have students who speak, but do not read Spanish, that is your first challenge. Obtain pre-primer materials in both languages. Encourage their learning to read in both. Coalesce the materials.

Combine both languages in your efforts. This will take time. It will be doubly meaningful to your Mexican-American clients.

5. Obtain materials (example: Laubach materials) which include such survival skills as checkwriting, application completion, and driver's test questions. Integrate these practical materials into the program for those who need them. Those materials of this nature which are only written in English should also be translated into Spanish for better understanding on the client's part. Keep in mind that in some states GED tests can be taken in Spanish.

C. #4 Mexican-American "World View"

Part A

Read this section to gain information on how the Mexican-American "world view" differs from the Anglo-American "world view."

1. There are a number of ways the Mexican-American world view differs from the Anglo-American world view. Awareness of some of these things is important. Some of those differences are listed below:

   a. Status to the Anglo-American often results from what he does and what his education has been. Status to the Mexican-American is often grounded in the honor of the lineage of his/her family and if that is maintained by him/her.

   b. Anglo-Americans tend to do for the common good. There is often little regard for the specific individual. Mexican-Americans often have a particularistic approach. A specific individual one's relationship with that person will often be prior to the larger good of the community or the country.

   c. Anglo-Americans are many times affectively neutral, striving to only express emotions acceptable to their own status. To them, free expression of personal feelings is often not a desired trait. Mexican-American culture often sees emotional responses and expressions as important. To them, affective expression lends itself naturally to the fact that one's social life and relationships are a larger part of life.

   d. In Anglo-American culture, one's level of aspiration is thought to lead to a ladder of success best described by superlatives like best, first, and most. The Mexican-American culture often sees success as being satisfied with the present.

e. Work is often an end in itself to Anglo-Americans. Many of them see success as coming from work. Mexican-Americans tend to work to satisfy their present needs. It has been said that they feel a poor man will go to heaven as soon as a rich man.

f. Anglo-Americans often strive to save for the future, and see thrift as desirable. Mexican-Americans much of the time share what they have with their kin group and see little value in saving.

g. Anglo-Americans exist from the premise that the world is changing and such changes are inevitable and acceptable. The Mexican-Americans' reaction to change is often negative. They tend to follow the old ways in confidence. They often feel if the old ways have worked, there is no reason to change them.

h. Anglo-Americans usually have and seek to find scientific explanations for all behavior. Mexican-Americans accept non-scientific explanations for natural phenomena like sickness and various forms of behavior.

i. Competition is usually part of the Anglo-American way. Aggression is often considered desirable. One competes to win, with first prize the goal. Mexican-Americans tend to stress humility and acceptance of the status quo. Submission, rather than aggression tends to describe Mexican-American behavior in this instance.

j. Anglo-Americans often feel individuals can shape their own destiny. In that case, self-realization for each person is seen as limited only by one's capacities to achieve. Mexican-Americans tend to be fatalistic, feeling that they have little or no control over their destinies. Their religious affiliation tends to keep life routinized and predestined, with an emphasis on obedience.

Part B

1. Read this section to visualize some of the ways how the "world view" of Mexican-Americans can affect their perceptions of and participation in ABE.

   a. Since Mexican-Americans have generally maintained isolation in their kin group, they are often not concerned with the acquisition of Anglo-American ways. That is not the purpose of ABE anyway. Keep in mind that if they are forced to think and act as Anglo-Americans, they'll possibly forget ABE and

drop out. They need the opportunity in ABE to coalesce all their preceptions, with no pressure from the trainee.

b. Since Mexican-Americans often see material things as a necessary and not an end to themselves or an indication of status, the reasons they come to class will differ from the Anglo-Americans' concept of getting ahead. They may be there to meet qualifications for a job to survive, but their ideas of status and "getting ahead" will likely not have changed. To them, relationships and experiences may be more important than work.

c. Generally, Mexican-Americans join no voluntary groups outside of their kin group, although lately they have been more politically active as a group. Do not press their entry into other outside activities. Initially, their involvement in ABE is probably a big enough outside involvement.

d. Keep in mind that an anti-intellectual attitude has sometimes been the tone of Mexican-American culture. Often the only education urged was of a religious nature. Because of this, there may be a lack of behavioral support on the part of the family for the clients' educational goals or endeavors.

e. Mexican-Americans may live on a day-to-day basis. Long-range plans and goals might be hard for them to visualize. Try to see that the educational goals they envision are reachable and realistic in a fairly immediate manner.

f. The fatalistic concepts of Mexican-American culture often stress that people shouldn't expect too much from life, so they won't be disappointed if plans don't work out. These feelings will affect the Mexican-American clients' abilities to decide on educational goals or programs for themselves. Being able to think somewhat differently in this way will take them time. Partly, it will depend upon the degree of the clients' motivation.

g. The Mexican-American seeing change as unappealing and not being motivated to change might also limit the clients' ability to envision new educational avenues for themselves. Offering a number of realistic alternatives may help with this.

h. Do not question the nature of students' behavior and attitudes concerning illness, "the evil eye," or deviant behavior. Curranderos are a respected and necessary part of Mexican-American culture. Their folk medicine may likely be part of your students' lives. Negating that is a mistake. Faith in one's healer is half the battle in curing the ill. Judging such a phenomenon by the Anglo-American scientific approach will insult and negate students.

i. In Mexican-American culture, there is often a great awareness of personal differences. This awareness includes respect and admiration for individuality. Individual worth is often considered sacred. Mexican-Americans react differently to each person. They often do not see all people as being created equally, rather all people are different, but treated equally. Anglo-Americans tend to stress conformity rather than individuality. To them, desired traits are often for the group to adhere to one rule; the role for the community or a common goal. This Anglo-American trait is evident in education also—as "adjustment" to schools and how one behaves there. Effective action in the mainstream is usually initiated by groups—labor unions, political parties, civic clubs, etc. In Mexican-American culture there is not necessarily a common voice in mutual agreement. The tradition of individualism and adherence to kin groups fragments things further. The Mexican-American client will expect to be treated as an individual in ABE. Since individual differences will be great, and the program tuned to that fact, such an expectation is non unrealistic. Results from the individualistic approach will prove positive and necessary considering this cultural difference.

Part C

You might wish to do at least two of these activities so differences in world view will not hinder communication in your program.

1. Design a chart, bulletin board, or display in both Spanish and English that stresses some of the things that ABE might offer the clients. Include:

   a. A section stressing how the clients could share (culturally meaningful) books, and materials with their families.

      List some of the culturally relevant books which are available. Keep the list up to date. Have the books available for long-term checkout.

   b. If day-care is nearby, mention that other members of the family could be involved in story hours, traditional Mexican-American games, activities, and etc.

   c. Put up notices of enrichment programs and/or speakers that are relative to the Mexican-American community. Invite everyone, not just your client population. Ask for input from clients as to effective speakers and resource people to invite there.

2. After you've been working with the Mexican-American clients for a while, have an open house for the entire community. Serve refreshments that the clients have chosen. Plan the event with the clients.

3. Print up a brochure describing the program and some of its goals.

   a. Discuss with clients the format of the brochures and the kinds of things they would include in it. Make some suggestions but respect and include their ideas.
   b. Have it on colored paper, preferably, so it is an "eye-catcher."
   c. Print it in easily understood words with easily understood organization
   d. Print it in Spanish and English
   e. Make it available throughout the Mexican-American community at stores, laundromats, the church, and etc.
   f. Give clients the opportunity to distribute it and/or to take home with them for others in their family if they wish to do so
   g. Emphasize the sharing, enjoying, and positive aspects of ABE
   h. Make this brochure as culturally relevant as you can. Do not allow it to appear as simply an extension of the Anglo-American educational system

C. #5 Time

Part A

Read this section to gain information about the Mexican-American concept of time.

1. The Mexican-American concept of time attaches little importance to time schedules or punctuality.

   a. Time is generally conceived of as in the present of "now." Anglo-Americans usually have future-time oriengation
   b. To Mexican-Americans, time is often felt to be a gift of life to be enjoyed to the fullest. Wasting time is not understood or of concern, neither is postponing
   c. A Mexican-American is said to be one who doesn't hurry his/her share of good to come in life
   d. In Spanish the clock "walks"; in English the clock "runs"

Part B

1. Read this section to visualize how different concepts of time might affect ABE.

a. Punctuality is often not considered as important by Mexican-Americans. The trainee should remember this. The clients will get there if they can. If not, they will probably attach no negative feelings to their absence or lateness
b. Students may ask you, "Our time or your time?" Transactions to them are often of sociabilities, not commodities in terms of time
c. Anglo-Americans often equate responsibility with punctuality and see time as money. To the Mexican-American responsibility is often based on immediate needs of family and friends. So, getting to ABE may easily be superseded by family priorities, and punctuality might not be considered by Mexican-American clients
d. The Anglo-American adherence to time schedules is quite different than the approach of the Mexican-American. Often to the Mexican-American, what is going to happen, will, when it does happen. The Anglo-American might say, "I missed the bus." The Mexican-American might say, "The bus left me."
e. Be available for class when you are supposed to on a regular basis. Try to be flexible in the closing hour of class
f. Do not express impatience at the lateness or absence of students. Those things do not necessarily indicate that they have a lack of interest, are irresponsible, are offended at you, or are non-communicative
g. Let the clients know where you can be reached during times other than class hours. This availability to them is an indication of your commitment, interest, and respect for their "time"
h. As a person adjusting to Mexican-American time, you may feel frustration and a lack of understanding or acceptance of it. Counseling/Instructing will happen when the clients are there. Hang loose.

Part C

You might wish to do these things so Mexican-American concept of time is not a potential impediment to your ABE program.

1. Post class hours in both Spanish and English, and in a number of places.

2. Keep attendance in a careful, but not judgmental way.

3. Make a point of reinforcing prompt and regular attendance.

4. Do not stress tardiness or lack of attendance.

C. #6 Manners and Diplomacy

Part A

1. Read this section to gain information on how concepts of manners and diplomacy differ between Anglo-Americans and Mexican-Americans and can have an impact on the process of effective communication.

   a. Anglo-Americans often believe that good communication involves frankness and openness, even though they may use small talk to get an "open" conversation going. They often see desired traits in communication as being brief and to the point, often at the expense of tact.

   b. Mexican-Americans have great concern and respect for others' feelings. Often an underlying rule to communication for them is that a screen must be provided for the other person to maintain their dignity behind. They generally pride themselves in their art of communication. It involves:

      1. Elaborate and indirect verbal expression
      2. Constant awareness of the other's individuality and personality in order to have good communication with them
      3. The goal is to have as harmonious a conversation as possible
      4. This way of communicating is considered a matter of courtesy, not as evasive or deceitful
      5. Communication to the Mexican-American is considered effective by hypothetically placing oneself in the other's position, by suggestion, or by talking about a hypothetical situation

Part B

1. Read this section to visualize how one can bridge this gap in meaningful communication in the ABE setting.

   a. Avoid direct questioning of the Mexican-American's motives or methods. Such questioning might be considered insulting
   b. Don't try to change the client's beliefs or criticize them. To do that would usually be considered inexcusable and belittling.
   c. Since your ABE group will be comprised of people from various backgrounds and with different life experiences, let them set the pattern for communication and you follow suit. This will

require great flexibility and adept verbal maneuvering on your part. It is worth the effort. It is one way of respecting the client. Such a positive base is invaluable when counseling or instructing distinct persons

C. #7 Humor

Part A

Read this section to gain information about Mexican-American humor.

1. Anglo-Americans often engage in humor that involves kidding about things that otherwise might be hurtful to the recipient if they were expressed differently.

   a. This type of humor is often offensive to Mexican-Americans
   b. The Mexican-American might see this as a severe put-down and sharp criticism. To Mexican-Americans, such criticism is often intolerable and indicates great insensitivity. So, your humor may be misinterpreted as sharp, insensitive criticism. When the client reacts that way, you may see them as humorless or poor sports. Being aware of this can help the Anglo-American trainee avoid such unnecessary misinterpretations that can create bad feelings

Part B

1. Scrutinize yourself in these ways:

   a. Analyze to see if your humor is of an objective, not personal nature. Try to visualize your humor in the other person's point of view.

   b. Be friendly, but not involved in much humorous exchange, until you know your clients fairly well. Then you can appreciate and partake in the type of humor you have seen them display

C. #8 One way to become better acquainted with the Mexican-American community in a positive manner.

Part A

1. Read this section to gain some information that might offer some insight to a trainee with Mexican-American clients. For Mexican-Americans to exist in our predominately Anglo-American society, they may likely need to learn some tools for survival. The

community at large needs to live in a culturally relative manner, encouraging a bi-cultural existence for those persons who are distinct.

Mexican-Americans need to gain understanding of themselves in relation to their group as well as in terms of the larger society. ABE is a setting for them to discover their rights, assets, and identities. Their cultural heritage has to be visible and part of ABE. They likely need to be able to harmonize Mexican-American and Anglo-American systems. If they experience conflicts, they probably need to realize the assets of both systems in order to survive. To assess their own place in society, they often need to understand their Mexican-American heritage. To assume a place within society, they need to assess both Mexican-American and Anglo-American relevance. Part of our relationships will include an exchange of values and perspectives. This will be edifying to both the trainee and clients. It may also serve to enlighten both to visualize more realistically cultural differences they are facing and coping with.

Individuals involved must not base their perspectives on value judgments formed from stereotypes. It must be kept in mind that until now, communication between Mexican-Americans has often been less than satisfactory. Stereotyping has been part of past communication, and should be avoided from here on out.

As Anglo-American trainees, we must demolish our stereotypes of Mexican-Americans, and yet deal realistically with their cultural differences by being aware of them as individuals, sensitive in trying to understand them, and above all, respecting them. We will possibly represent the mainstream to our Mexican-American clients. That may initially create negative feelings, and we may feel at an unfair disadvantage. At the same time, we are in a positive setting to them and may also be viewed neutrally.

To evaluate potential cultural barriers discussed in this module, you must assess and define the particular differences you deal with, and also the degree to which those differences are barriers. This module has given you a starting point. Remember, you are the go-between. You will be dealing with the community at large as well as your Mexican-American clients. As long as Mexican-Americans are misunderstood or considered unacceptable to the larger society, the option of success for them is minimal.

Part B

1. You may choose to do this activity to better acquaint yourself with the Mexican-American community and its true needs. Interview a Mexican-American member of either (1) the local board of one of the Mexican-American community's social agencies, (2) the local Mexican-American day care center's board or staff, or (3) the person involved in bilingual education programs in the local schools. Ask questions directly related to your area of interest. Example: If you are in ABE, ask things concerning (1) assets and deficiencies concerning the local program, (2) needs in terms of facilities used or materials needed.

D. Source List for Further Reading for Module 9.3 (Optional)

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